



## The Danish module for Self-Evaluation of non-formal personal competencies

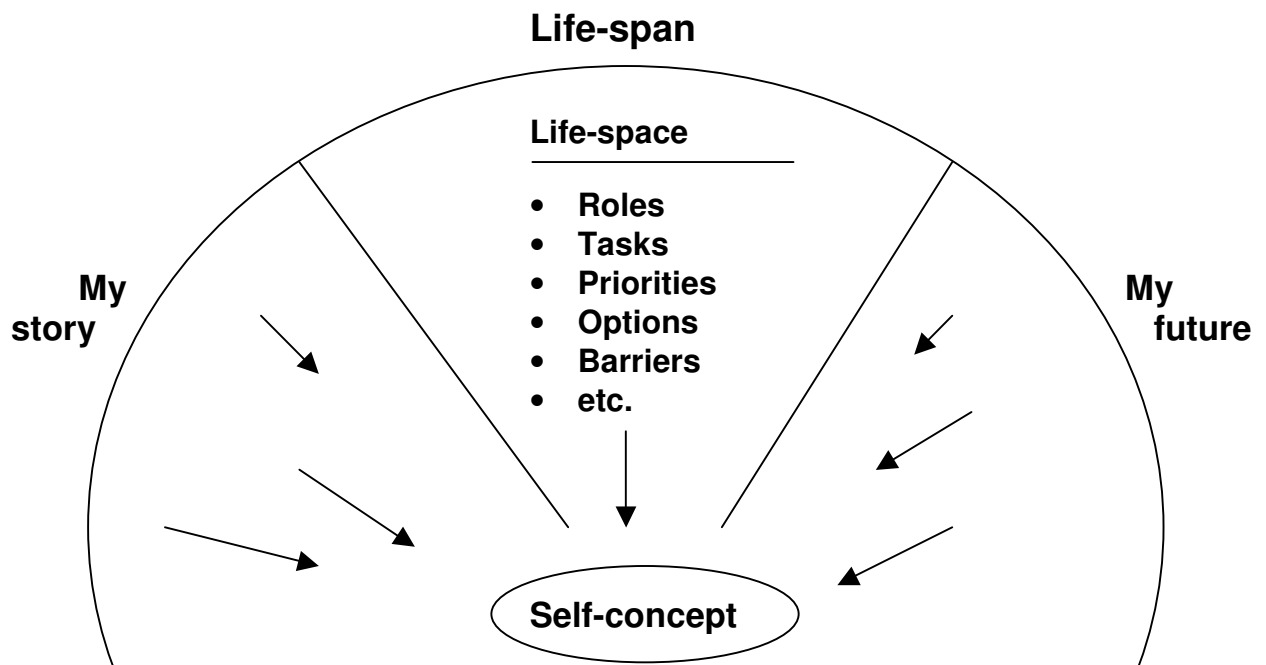
### Introduction

The Danish tools presented in this Handbook are based on an individual perspective and aim at creating self-awareness through a process of re-evaluating earlier learning experiences, skills and competences. Specific attention is paid to the individuals own view on his/her competencies and aim to enhance the quality of the assistance offered to the individual in the process of clarifying, discovering or uncovering his or her possible competences.

The tools aim at empowering individuals to reconstruct their vocational identity, through working with self-concept and career beliefs. In turn, this could lead to an up-dated or reconstructed view of future career options and expand the field of possible choices and actions

The tools are based on the assumption that vocational identity and self-concept are both context specific (influenced by e.g. historical, cultural and social factors) subjective, constructed and fluid and that self-concept/self-efficacy beliefs guide and influences career behaviour.

The tools are primarily inspired by Donald Super and the the Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Careers but are also based on some of Albert Bandura's theories on self-efficacy and outcome expectations.





The two different self-evaluation tools are:

- A) A self-guided tool aimed at the individual participant
- B) A dialog guide aimed at teachers and career counsellors

Both tools include questions or exercises that evolve around the following topics:

- 1) My life-story (life-span)
- 2) My present situation (life-space)
- 3) My conceptions about my future (outcome expectations)
- 4) How do I proceed? (possible career paths)
- 5) My professional and personal competencies (vocational identity)
- 6) My options and possible barriers
- 7) My personal goals and plans

These seven thematically organised content areas cover what most career researchers agree are the influencing factors in the shaping of individuals' vocational identity. They all have an impact on how individuals interpret their options when choosing a career path.

Below we give some examples for exercises proposed in the self-guided tool for participants. The exercises are related to the different topics.

### 1) "My life-story"

The purpose of this exercise is to help you remember how your life and career has progressed so far and to provide you with a tool to bring together your experiences.

- A) *Imagine that you are about to tell your life story. Take a piece of paper and draw a big half circle on it. The line illustrates your life-span and starts at the year 0, the time when you were born, and continues to beyond your present age. Think about your life course and mark the age when something particular happened. Marks at the age of 18 and 21 could, for example, signify the dates you started and finished a course.*

You can mark the places you have been or what you have done and also life-events that have been important to you and affected your life-course and/or your self- image.

### 2) My present situation

The purpose with this exercise is to provide you with an overview of your present situation, in order to help you make better decisions. What is important in your life right now and what challenges do you face?

- A) *Imagine that you now look at the part of your life that illustrates the age you are now and some years ahead. Draw on a piece of paper this "pie-slice" and write keywords in this that describe how this piece looks.*

You can use the questions below as a source of inspiration – remembering how you would characterise your present life:

- Where am I right now – in my life and career (e.g. job, education, choices)?
- What challenges do I face at the moment (e.g. provider, nursing a sick family member, moving to a new home etc.)?
- What is influencing my life right now? (resources, options and barriers)
- How and what do I prioritise now and why (what is important to me, what makes me happy)?
- What am I occupied with (how do I spend my time)?



### 3) My ideas about the future

The purpose of this exercise is to help you imagine your possible futures or options and to consider which one of these you would prefer.

A) *Draw a picture of your self (matchstick-man) on the bottom of the empty space below. Draw a big circle on the top and try to think 5-10 years ahead. Imagine your possible futures as small "future-bubbles" in the big circle. Draw these circles and write a keyword in each to remember what this future contains.*

You can use the following questions to start thinking about what possible futures you can imagine:

- Where am I if I do not do anything different than today?
- What future did I want for myself when I was a child/young/younger?
- Where do I want to be in the future – if I had a magic stick and could choose whatever I wanted?
- Where can I imagine being in 5-10 years (thinkable/possible futures)

### 4) How do I proceed?

The purpose of this exercise is to help you find possible roads to reach the goals included in your preferred future.

A) *Look at the page with your futures and draw a ladder from "you" to your preferred future. Draw steps on the ladder that illustrate your path. Write on each step a keyword that illustrates what this step mean – what will it take to reach your goal (get more money, take a course, move etc.).*

- What will it take to reach my goals?
- What will I have to do?
- What conditions must be present (e.g. job vacancies, course opportunities, economy etc)?

### 5) My professional and personal resources

The purpose of this exercise is to help you think about the learning experiences you already have and to evaluate your professional and personal resources.

A) *Look at the drawing with your preferred future again and compare it with the list you have made in exercise 1 (professional and personal competences). Think about what competences you already have and how these can be used to bring you closer to your goal.*

- What competencies do I already have and what additional competences do I need?
- What personal resources do I have (e.g. time, money, energy)?
- How can I use my competencies in new/other directions?
- How can I document my competencies (competence assessment, accreditation)?

### 6) My possibilities and constraints

The purpose of this exercise is to assist you in considering how your personal goals are connected with the options you have and barriers you might meet accomplishing these options.

*Consider the opportunities you have to reach your goals and what could possibly prevent you from doing so.*

- What possibilities exist (e.g. jobs, courses)?
- What are the barriers and limitations (e.g. job-vacancies, entry requirements, economy etc.)?



Leonardo da Vinci

- What demands do I meet right now – societal (e.g. job-placement) or in my private life (family) and how do these interfere with my plans?
- How will I overcome possible barriers?

### 7) My personal goals and plans

The purpose of this exercise is to help you develop short- and long-term goals for your future and to understand how your plans fit in to the context and general life-circumstances.

*A) Write your plan on a sheet of paper. Write the present year on the top of the paper and the goal(s) of your preferred future on the bottom. Consider what interim goals could be relevant on the way to your preferred future. Mark these on the plan as well.*

You can use the following as an inspiration to your plan:

- What short-and long-term goals do I have for my future?
- What strategies and plans do I have to reach these?
- How does the nearest future look – what will I do and when?
- How do I know if my plan is realistic?
- What will I do to document my competencies?
- How can I gain more experience and/or skills?
- What priorities must I have in my life, in order to reach my goals?

### Advantages and Strengths related to content and specific focus of the tools

- The exercises take as a starting point the individual biography (1) and present the ‘life-space’ (2) without being biased by a particular view of ‘relevant’ competences and/or issues of importance to the individuals’ career planning. The exercises help the individual to remember: Where have I been? What have I done? – And what could I possibly have learned from that? They also stimulate the individual to reflect on how career decisions are and have been interwoven in the individual life-span and connecting life-space(s)
- Working with both the past (1), the present (2) and the future (3) helps the individual to update and contextualise his or her view on competences and to view these in connection with personal priorities, goals and outcome expectations
- The exercises encourage the participant to explore multiple possible futures (3) and various paths to pursue individual goals (4) - and to prioritise and choose among these. This stimulates reflective thought and awareness of individual priorities and possible restraints.
- The individuals are being encouraged to review earlier learning experiences (1, 5) and to (re-) evaluate these in a new context (personal goals). This approach motivates the individual to pursue their goals and engage themselves in formal competence assessment and/or further learning.
- On the basis of the individuals’ “updated” view of his or her self (vocational identity), priorities, goals and aspirations (1-5), the participants are stimulated to act on their goals through personal plans (7) based on an analysis of possible options and barriers (6).

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